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**The Texas German Dialect Archive: A Multimedia Resource for Research, Teaching,
and Outreach”**

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The Texas German Dialect Archive: A Multimedia Resource for Research, Teaching, and Outreach

Abstract

This paper describes the organization of the Texas German Dialect Project (TGDP), which aims to document and archive the remnants of Texas German. The mission of the Texas German Dialect Project is (1) to document Texas German as it reflects the rich cultural and linguistic traditions of its residents; (2) to gather basic research information about linguistic diversity; (3) to provide linguistic information for public and educational interests, and (4) to use the collected materials for the improvement of educational programs. The paper first gives a brief historical overview of the development of the Texas German community, starting with the settlement of the first German immigrants in Texas in the 1830s and continuing to the present day. Next, we describe the workflow of the TGDP. We then discuss how the Texas German Dialect Archive (TGDA) is currently used for linguistic research on new-dialect formation, language contact, and language death. Since the open-ended sociolinguistic interviews contain a wealth of information on the history and cultural practices of the Texas German community, the archive is also of interest to historians and anthropologists. Finally, we show how the archive has been used for community outreach programs throughout central Texas.

The Texas German Dialect Archive:
A Multimedia Resource for Research, Teaching, and Outreach

I. Introduction¹

The German language has a long history in the state of Texas. The first large wave of German settlers arrived in the early 1840s, and large-scale immigration continued for a number of decades thereafter. For many years, German was well-established in Texas; there were German-language schools, newspapers, and church services, as well as a lively social circle for Texas Germans, and one can trace the emergence of a new variety of German, namely Texas German, through time. The current situation is radically different; although there are still approximately 8000-10,000 speakers of Texas German, as many of these German-language social organizations have either been dissolved or have abandoned German in favor of English and Texas German is clearly an endangered dialect.

There is a correspondingly long history of research into Texas German, ranging from the pioneering studies of Eikel (1954) and Gilbert (1972) to more recent works like Fuller and Gilbert (2003), Nicolini (2004) and Salmons and Lucht (2006). This paper introduces the most recent large-scale study of Texas German, the Texas German Dialect Archive (TGDA), an on-line multimedia archive containing recordings of interviews (including transcriptions and translations) with more than 250 speakers of present-day Texas German. We first give a brief historical overview of the development of the Texas German community, starting with the

¹ Various versions of this paper have been presented in a number of fora, most recently at the Berkeley Germanic Linguistics Roundtable (Berkeley, California, April 2008), the Annual Meeting of the Society of German-American Studies (Williamsburg, Virginia, April 2008), and the Germanic Linguistics Annual Conference (Madison, Wisconsin, May 2008). We are indebted to the conference participants for useful comments and discussion. The TGDP gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the University of Texas at Austin and Humanities Texas (formerly Texas Council for the Humanities). Parts of this paper are based on Boas (2002, 2003, 2005b, 2006, and forthcoming c).

settlement of the first German immigrants in Texas in the 1830s and continuing to the present day. Next, we describe the workflow of the Texas German Dialect Project (TGDP), which aims to record, document, and archive the remnants of the rapidly eroding Texas German dialect. In this context, we discuss how the Texas German Dialect Archive is currently used for linguistic research on new-dialect formation, language contact, and language death. Since the open-ended sociolinguistic interviews contain a wealth of information on the history and cultural practices of the Texas German community, the archive is also of interest to historians and anthropologists. Finally, we show how the archive has been used for community outreach programs throughout central Texas.

II. The socio-historical context²

As noted above, large scale German immigration to Texas began in the 1840s. Nicolini (2004: 35) points out that the story of German immigration to Texas really begins with the founding of the town of Bastrop by Philipp Bögel in 1823, but large-scale immigration did not get under way until after the founding of the *Mainzer Adelsverein*, later known as the *Verein deutscher Fürsten und Edelleute zum Schutze Deutscher Einwanderer in Texas* (also called the *Texasverein*) in 1842. Promises of land grants and transportation to Texas attracted a significant number of immigrants, mainly from northern and central Germany; by 1850 there were 8,266 German-born immigrants living in Texas (Jordan 1975: 48), and by 1860 that number had increased to nearly 20,000, for a total of approximately 30,000 Texas Germans at that time, including the American-born children of immigrants (Jordan 1975: 54). Although German immigration to Texas eventually slackened, the number of Texas Germans continued to increase. Nicolini (2004: 42) suggests that at the beginning of the twentieth century approximately 1/3 of

² See Biesele (1928), Moore (1980), Salmons (1983), Boas (2005a), Nicolini (2004), and Salmons and Lucht (2006) for additional overviews of the changing status of German in Texas.

all Texans were of German ancestry, and Eichhoff (1986) estimates that there were approximately 75,000-100,000 Texas Germans in 1907. Kloss (1977) states that in 1940 there were approximately 159,000 Texas Germans, with most of the Texas Germans living in the “German belt,” which encompasses the area between Gillespie and Medina Counties in the west, Bell and Williamson Counties in the north, Burleson, Washington, Austin, and Fort Bend Counties in the east, and DeWitt, Karnes, and Wilson Counties in the south.

For the first several decades of German settlement in Texas, the Texas Germans were relatively isolated. In some parts of Texas, they settled with Czechs or Sorbians (Salmons 1983, Wilson 1976), but such mixed settlements were the exception, rather than the rule. A number of social and political factors contributed to this isolation, ranging from deliberate attempts at self-sufficiency by German settlers (cf. Benjamin 1909) to the anti-slavery views held by most German settlers, which would certainly be isolating in a slave state like Texas (cf. Salmons 1983: 187). This isolation, coupled with serious attempts at language maintenance, allowed for the retention of Texas German. Signs of this language maintenance/retention include the following: there were 145 church congregations offering German-language church services as of 1917 (Arndt and Olson 1961: 615, Salmons and Lucht 2006: 168); there were numerous German-language newspapers and periodicals, some with very healthy circulation numbers (*Texas Vorwärts*, published in Austin, had a circulation of approximately 6100 in 1900, according to Salmons and Lucht 2006: 174); there was a wide range of German literature written in Texas (some of it reminiscent of von Fallerleben’s *Texas Lieder*); there were German-language schools and numerous social organizations, including choirs (e.g. the *Westtexanische Gebirgs-Sängerbund*, founded in April 1881, and the *San Antonio Maennergesang Verein*, founded in

July 1847), social groups like the *Hermanns-Söhne*, shooting clubs, and so on (see Nicolini 2004: 46-49 for further discussion of such groups).

This situation changed dramatically, starting with the passing of an English-only law for public schools in 1909 (Salmons 1983: 188). World War I, especially following America's entry into the war in 1917 and the resulting increase in anti-German sentiment, dealt another blow to Texas German (another English-only law for public schools was passed in 1918, as Salmons 1983: 188 notes, for instance), and led to the stigmatization of German and the beginning of its decline.³ This situation was not unique to Texas, as similar situations cropped up in various other states with a strong German presence. Various other developments also attest to the stigmatization of German around this time. Although some of these developments seem relatively innocuous or even ludicrous in hindsight (e.g. the replacement of the term *sauerkraut* with the term *Liberty cabbage* and the alternation of pronunciation in place names of German origin), they did severely damage the position of German in Texas. Interviews with various informants recorded in the TGDA testify to the stigmas felt by many Texas Germans at this time and afterwards.

World War II reinforced the stigma attached to Germany, Texas Germans, and the German language. Institutional support for the widespread maintenance and use of German in venues like the press, schools, and churches was largely abandoned, with devastating consequences for the Texas German language. German-language newspapers and periodicals stopped publishing (*Das Wochenblatt*, published in Austin, as well as *Schützes Jahrbuch für Texas* and *Schützes Monatsbuch für Texas*, both published in San Antonio, stopped publishing in

³ Bloomfield (1938: 310) gives another example of this anti-German prejudice, arguing that the Germanic linguist Eduard Prokosch lost his faculty position at the University of Texas during World War I, "because of a correct factual statement in his textbook *Introduction to German* (published in 1911) concerning the representation, under the Empire, of the German people in the Reichstag."

1940) or switched to English as the language of publication (the *Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung* was the last to switch to English, in December 1957);⁴ some German-language schools closed and German instruction was dropped in others; and German-speaking churches replaced German-language services with English-language ones (some German-language services were retained, especially on holidays like Good Friday and Christmas, according to Nicolini 2004: 101, and at least one church still offers a German-language service on ‘fifth Sundays’, according to Roesch in progress).

The end of World War II brought additional challenges to the maintenance of German language and culture in Texas. Increasing migration of non-German speakers to the traditional German enclaves, as well as the refusal of these newcomers to assimilate linguistically to their new homes, led to the large-scale abandonment of German in the public sphere. The increased use of English in the public domain pushed German even further into the private domain. At the same time, younger Texas Germans left the traditional German-speaking areas for employment in larger cities such as Austin, San Antonio, and Houston, or to enroll in college or enlist in the military (Jordan 1977, Wilson 1977). For this group, speaking primarily English had a number of practical advantages, mainly economic, and this change to speaking primarily English weakened their command of Texas German. The increasing number of marriages of Texas Germans to partners who could not speak German also cannot be forgotten. In such linguistically mixed marriages, English typically became the language of the household at the expense of German. Children raised in such households are typically monolingual in English, or have only a very limited command of Texas German, typically a few stock phrases like prayers or profanities (Nicolini 2004, Boas 2005b). Finally, the development of the American interstate highway system under President Dwight Eisenhower (himself of German descent) in the 1950s

⁴ See Salmons and Lucht (2006: 173-178) for further discussion of the German-language press in Texas.

(construction started in 1956) eliminated another factor that had contributed to Texas German language maintenance, as the once-isolated communities became much more accessible. This new accessibility cut both ways, as it was now easier both for non-German speakers to visit or live in the originally German-speaking communities, and for German-speakers to accept employment in more urban areas. Both of these possibilities led to the spread of English at the expense of German.

Despite these factors, in the 1960s approximately 70,000 speakers of Texas German remained in the German-belt.. Today only an estimated 8-10,000 Texas Germans, primarily in their sixties or older, still speak the language of their forbearers fluently (Boas 2003, 2005b, forthcoming c). English has become the primary language for most Texas Germans in both private and public domains, although the reverse would still have been true as late as the 1940s. With no signs of this language shift being halted or reversed and fluent speakers almost exclusively above the age of 60, Texas German is now critically endangered according to McConvell's (2002) levels of endangerment, and is expected to become extinct within the next 30 years. This sharp decrease in speakers puts Texas German on the list of about 3000 languages and dialects world-wide that are expected to go extinct by the end of the 21st century (see Crystal 2000 or Nettle and Romaine 2000 for these lists). In this respect, our assessment of the situation differs sharply from that of Nicolini (2004: 165), who contends that "Interviews mit alten Texanern lassen den Schluss zu, dass die deutsche Sprache am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts lebendiger ist, als es in der germanistischen Forschung gemeinhin gesehen wird."

III. The Texas German Dialect Project

While there have been earlier in-depth surveys and recordings of Texas German speech (e.g. Eikel 1954, based on fieldwork done in the 1940s, and Gilbert 1972, based on fieldwork done in the 1960s), there are no large-scale and detailed studies that systematically trace more current developments in Texas German.⁵ As of 2001, there was no data on the current state of Texas German available for linguistic, historical, and anthropological research, or for heritage preservation efforts by the Texas German community. In response to this situation, Hans C. Boas founded the Texas German Dialect Project (TGDP) in the Department of Germanic Studies at the University of Texas at Austin in 2001. The main goal of the TGDP is to record, document, and analyze the remnants of the rapidly eroding Texas German dialect; preserving Texas German is seen as a less crucial (and probably impossible) task. In order to achieve this goal, a number of procedures were set up to govern the workflow of the project. After reviewing previous work on Texas German (e.g., Eikel 1949, 1966, 1967; Gilbert 1963, 1965, 1972; Salmons 1983, and Guion 1996, among others), a strategy was developed that would allow for a broad-scale collection of data representing the largest possible number of linguistic features of current-day Texas German. The following section describes the workflow of the TGDP, and then reviews the architecture of the web-based Texas German Dialect Archive (TGDA).

Over the past seven years, members of the Texas German Dialect Project (TGDP) have recorded three different types of data. The first type of data consists of English word lists and sentences taken from the *Linguistic Atlas of Texas German* (Gilbert 1972) and from Eikel (1954). Before interviews begin, informants sign a consent form giving permission to use the recordings for educational purposes and for heritage documentation efforts, including

⁵ Guion (1996), based on fieldwork carried out in 1992, was the most recent such study before the onset of the TGDP, and is a much smaller study.

digitization and delivery over the web. An interview begins by eliciting personal information (data and place of birth, level of education, language spoken at home when growing up, etc.) from the interviewee. Interviewers read the English words and sentences to the informants who are then asked to translate these words and sentences from English into Texas German. The interviews last about 20-60 minutes; are recorded on MiniDisc, DAT, or solid state digital recorders; and normally take place at the informants' homes, nursing homes, museums, or local churches. The use of word lists and sentences enables the comparison of the current recordings with data collected over four decades ago, and also provides well-focused and well-controlled data sets giving information about the distribution of specific phonological, morphological, and syntactic features in present-day Texas German.

The second type of data seeks to capture the informants' daily use of Texas German. An eight page questionnaire serves as the basis for sociolinguistic interviews conducted in German. At the beginning of an interview, interviewers speak (standard) German to the informants to begin eliciting personal information about the informants in Texas German (date and place of birth, place of origin of informants' ancestors, languages spoken with the parents at home, etc). During this first phase of the interview, informants are typically aware of the recording device and pay attention to their speech. However, after the first two to three minutes, informants typically feel more relaxed, forget about the recorder, and begin to respond to questions in a relaxed way by speaking Texas German. The second section of the interview consists of about 140 questions in German about a wide range of topics, including childhood activities, the community, religion, education, living conditions, tourism, government, language, and current activities. These questions are designed to produce casual, relaxed conversation in which informants are given the chance to respond freely in Texas German without being asked to

produce specific linguistic structures, as is the case with the word and sentence list translation task. Allowing informants to speak freely also makes it possible to examine linguistic features of Texas German that were not noticed by previous studies, because such elicitation methods were not included in the research methodology of previous studies. These interviews typically last from 40 to 60 minutes.

The third type of data seeks to capture the informants' use of Texas German when participating in activities with other native Texas Germans. In order to record this type of data, we chose card-playing activities, dinner preparation, and farm chores. After filling out the consent forms, informants are given wireless microphones which are linked to a recorder. Interviewers leave the area and do not get involved in the 60-100 minute long recording activities. The three scenarios enable the collection of data in a variety of environments that involve different usages of Texas German.

The three types of spoken data are augmented by a written biographical questionnaire. This questionnaire elicits information about age, date of birth, level of education, domains of language use (Texas German and English), and language attitudes, among others. The biographical data are used to create the metadata records for each informant and each interview to be included in the digital on-line archive. Since the beginning of the project, members of the TGDP have interviewed more than 260 speakers, totaling more than 550 hours of data. The recordings are stored on MiniDiscs, whose average lifespan is estimated to be around ten years. In order to preserve the recordings for a longer period of time and to make them available to as wide an audience as possible, they are stored in a digital archive. More recently, we have started using solid state digital recorders, as they are easier to use and provide a higher quality of

recording. The following section discusses the various processing steps that the recordings undergo before they are deposited in the on-line Texas German Dialect Archive (TGDA).

IV. Processing of recordings

The recordings are transferred from MiniDisc to our main workstation and saved in WAV format (48,000 Hz, 16-bit Stereo). As protecting the anonymity of informants is important, no recordings accessible to the public contain any personal identifying information. To achieve this goal, we remove the names of informants and edit out sections of interviews in which informants refer to specific titles and names of places or events that could be used to identify them. In addition, each audio master file is assigned a unique combination of numbers referring to the interviewer, the informant, and the number of the interview conducted with that informant. Further information includes a number identifying the file as a master file and a letter showing whether the file is audio or combined audio/video. For example, the file name 8-154-3-0-a.wav indicates that interviewer No. 8 conducted this interview with informant No. 154, and that this is the third interview with that informant. The '0' indicates that this file is a master file. When a copy of the master file is edited for transcription and translation at later stages of our workflow, each sub-section is identified by a series of consecutive numbers replacing the '0'. Finally, the 'a' in the file name stands for 'audio' indicating that this is an audio master file. Subsequently, a copy of each master file is uploaded to the project's Linux-based file server.

After making the recording anonymous, they are segmented into smaller sections, or 'media sessions' that vary in length between about thirty seconds and six minutes. Providing smaller sections of interviews allows users with low bandwidth to access the recordings more easily than if they had to download an entire interview of 40-60 minutes. Each media session is a

segment of an interview that deals with a specific topic, such as the founding of Fredericksburg or how to make sausage. A media session may consist of a monologue, a dialogue, a song, or a poem, for example. Each media session is assigned a unique file name that identifies it as belonging to a specific master file and numbered consecutively. The edited media sessions are subsequently labeled with a descriptive name identifying their contents (e.g., “Shooting deer”, or “Brewing beer during prohibition”) and then saved in a separate folder on the file server. In addition, field notes are included with each interview to provide supplemental information about special circumstances surrounding the recording of the interview (number of speakers involved, location, etc.).

Once the recordings are segmented, they are transcribed and translated with ELAN (EUDICO Linguistic Annotator), which allows for the definition of a multitude of so-called parent tiers (for each speaker in an interview) with associated sub-tiers in combination with synchronized playing of video and audio data (both for annotation and for subsequent re-playing) (see Figure 1). ELAN has a number of advantages: (1) it is free, (2) it supports open formats such as XML, WAV, MPEG1/2, and UNICODE, and (3) it produces time-aligned transcriptions which facilitate verification in combination with the recording. Using a specific web-interface designed for the TGDP (see Figure 2), annotators check out the media sessions in WAV format from the file server, open them, and transcribe and translate them with ELAN. Once this step is completed, annotators load up the XML-compatible EAF transcription file produced by ELAN to the file server. Next, the files are checked for consistency; a reviewer examines a media session’s WAV and EAF files and conducts quality control. Finally, the EAF transcription file is returned to the file server.

Figure 1: ELAN (EUDICO Linguistic Annotator)

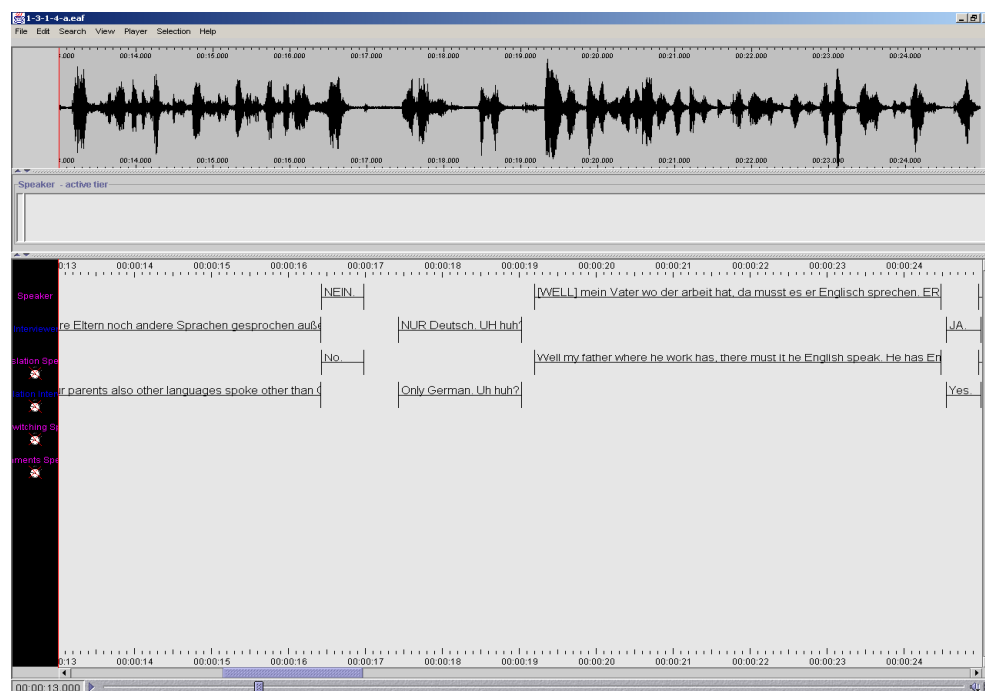


Figure 2: Web-based interface supporting the workflow of the TGDp

TCGDP Staff - Mozilla Firefox

http://tgd.org/staff/worksheets.php?search=10&file1=60&file2=154&file3=2

TCGDP Staff | Index | Interviews | Worksheets | Manager | Documentation | Logout

Open-Ended Interview 8-154-2

File Name	Notes	Title	Length (hrs)	Basic Annotation Assigned To	Basic Annotation Completed	Review Assigned To	Review Completed	Pub.	Man.
8-154-2-1-a	Add	Trading with the farmers - cotton for sausage	00:01:59	Ryan (Jun 21, 2006 7:07 am)	Jun 23, 2006 10:21 am	Sign up			Edit / Info
8-154-2-2-a	Add	Vegetable garden and other things around farm	00:01:03	Ryan (Jun 21, 2006 7:07 am)	Jun 23, 2006 10:21 am	Sign up			Edit / Info
8-154-2-3-a	Add	Brother was air force intelligence in WWII because he spoke German	00:02:01	Ryan (Jun 21, 2006 7:17 am)	Jun 23, 2006 10:21 am	Sign up			Edit / Info
8-154-2-4-a	Add	Summer reporting work for father	00:01:45	Ryan (Jun 21, 2006 7:20 am)	Jun 23, 2006 10:21 am	Sign up			Edit / Info
8-154-2-5-a	Add	Technological comforts around the house	00:01:47	Ryan (Jun 21, 2006 7:24 am)	Jun 23, 2006 10:20 am	Sign up			Edit / Info
8-154-2-6-a	Add	Societies at school	00:01:47	Ryan (Jun 21, 2006 7:33 am)	Jun 23, 2006 10:20 am	Sign up			Edit / Info
8-154-2-7-a	Add	Imported Lutheran pastor from Germany	00:02:37	Ryan (Jun 21, 2006 7:37 am)	Jun 23, 2006 10:20 am	Sign up			Edit / Info
8-154-2-8-a	Add	Father worked for exporter in France and England and stateide	00:02:09	Ryan (Jun 21, 2006 12:21 pm)	Jun 23, 2006 10:20 am	Sign up			Edit / Info
8-154-2-9-a	Add	Father was POW in WWI in England	00:02:06	Ryan (Jun 21, 2006 12:43 pm)	Jun 23, 2006 10:19 am	Sign up			Edit / Info
8-154-2-10-a	Add	Father came to LaGrange after the war	00:02:06	Ryan (Jun 21, 2006 12:52 pm)	Jun 23, 2006 10:19 am	Sign up			Edit / Info
8-154-2-11-a	Add	Father sang in a group called "Die Frösche" The Frogs	00:02:27	Ryan (Jun 21, 2006 12:56 pm)	Jun 23, 2006 10:19 am	Sign up			Edit / Info
8-154-2-12-a	Add	Liederkrantz	00:01:09	Ryan (Jun 22, 2006 6:58 am)	Jun 26, 2006 11:07 am	Sign up			Edit / Info
8-154-2-13-a	Add	School competitions	00:02:30	Ryan (Jun 22, 2006 7:12 am)	Jun 26, 2006 11:07 am	Sign up			Edit / Info
8-154-2-14-a	Add	Children didn't learn German	00:01:52	Ryan (Jun 22, 2006 7:20 am)	Jun 26, 2006 11:07 am	Sign up			Edit / Info

Done

start | TCGDP Staff - Mozilla Firefox | Removable Disk (G:) | Screenshots - Mozilla Firefox | Google | 3:56 PM

To publish a media session, a project member with manager privileges uses the internal staff web pages to access the MySQL database in order to check on the status of a media session. The files which have undergone both annotation and quality control are marked with a special icon that signals their status as “ready to be published.” A click on the file link automatically converts a media session’s WAV and EAF files into MP3 and HTML files, respectively, which are then stored on the file server. Producing such MP3 and HTML files is important to allow users of the archive with low bandwidth easy access to the archive’s holdings. This step is guided by the recommendation made by Bird & Simons (2003: 576) that one should “provide low-bandwidth surrogates for multimedia resources, e.g. publish MP3 files corresponding to large, uncompressed audio data” (see Boas 2006 for further discussion).

The final step before publishing a media session involves the inclusion of metadata. Based on the informants’ biographical questionnaires, the MySQL database includes a separate database table for metadata information. Each media session is thus associated with a specific set of metadata information values: the place and date of the recording, the place and date of the informant’s birth, the gender, the childhood residence, the current residence, the level of education, the language(s) spoken in the parents’ home before elementary school, and the language(s) of instruction in elementary school. Moreover, each file is associated with an additional 38 metadata values based on the IMDI metadata schema for endangered languages (see Johnson & Dwyer 2002 or Boas 2006 for further discussion).

Once the metadata and the different file formats of a media session are in place, a project member with manager privileges accesses the web-based interface to publish the media session. The only step necessary for publication is to check the box “publish media session” in a web form, and to hit return. With this step the “publication” value of that media session is marked as

positive in the MySQL database and a public-facing web site can access the audio and transcription files on the file server in combination with the metadata in the database. The following section describes how the public web pages of the Texas German Dialect Project can be used to access the media sessions.

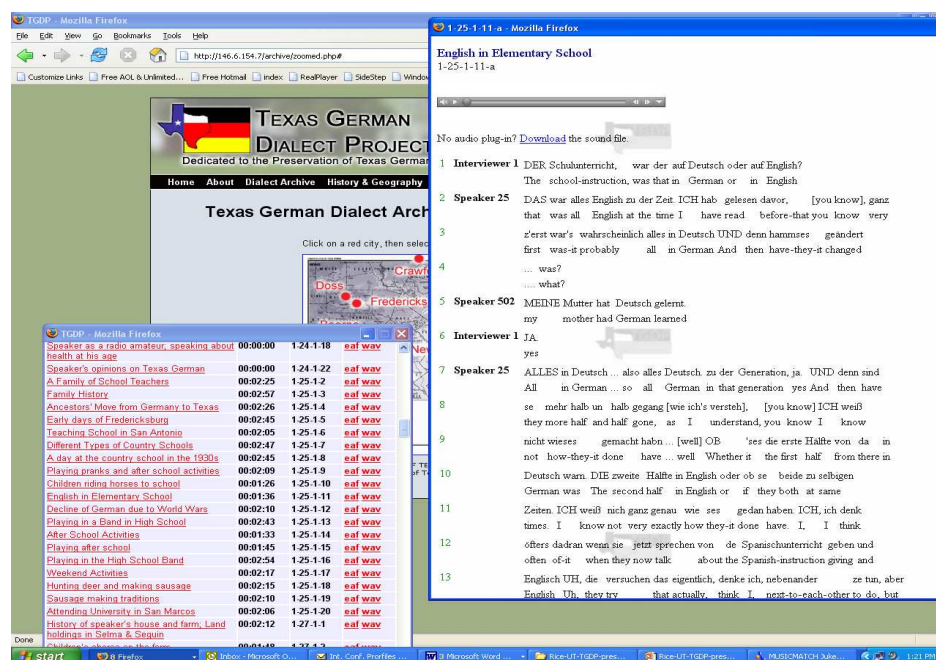
V. The Texas German Dialect Archive (TGDA)

From the home page of the TGDp (<http://www.tgdp.org>), which includes a wealth of information on Texas German history, geography, and culture users can access the Texas German Dialect Archive (TGDA) by clicking on “Dialect Archive.” With a username and a password, users then log on to the archive pages by agreeing to the terms and conditions of the archive. The log-in protocol fulfills four purposes for the dialect archive and the data it contains: (1) to make users agree to the terms and conditions of use of the archive before they access any data (e.g., citing archival materials appropriately, not using the data for commercial purposes, etc.); (2) to exclude a user’s access to the archive if the archive’s conditions of use are not met; (3) to have an inventory of users accessing the archive; and (4) to ascertain what types of data are accessed by individual users. After acknowledging the terms and conditions of use, users may choose between three different graphical user interfaces to access recordings and their accompanying transcriptions contained in the database.

To access the archived data as easily as possible, users can choose between two options. The first option for accessing files in the TGDA is via a number of digitized maps from the *Linguistic Atlas of Texas German* (Gilbert 1972). Users start by viewing a general map of Texas outlining the areas in which Texas German is spoken. By clicking on this area of central Texas, users are presented with a new window detailing the counties with individual locations for which

Texas German recordings are available. Clicking on a specific location, e.g., Fredericksburg, displays a pop-up window containing a list of media session names with their length and formats in combination with their unique ID numbers. The media sessions, which are available for download in different formats, are labeled with short titles summarizing their content (e.g., “Growing up on a farm”, or “Walking to church in the winter”). Linguists interested in time-aligned transcriptions and audio files with low compression rates may download WAV formats in combination with their EAF annotation files. To view and listen to these files, users need to employ ELAN. While this option for downloading allows for viewing time-aligned transcriptions in combination with uncompressed sound files, the size of WAV files may be 10 MB and more. The TGDA also offers versions of media sessions in MP3 and HTML formats. With this option, users may click on a file name, which opens a new window with an MP3 player and plays the audio portion of the media session. The same window contains a transcription and translation of the media session in HTML (see Figure 3). Users can read the transcript and its corresponding translation while the audio file is playing to understand the contents of the recording better.

Figure 3: Reading a media session's HTML transcript while listening to its MP3 sound file



Media sessions of the translation tasks (“Gilbert” and “Eikel” data) can also be accessed through the public archive web pages. By clicking on a specific location for which the archive contains recordings, users may choose among the 148 words, phrases, and sentences from Gilbert (1972), or the 191 sentences from Eikel (1954), whose re-recorded versions are also stored in the archive. A new window lists the full set of TGDp informants who have provided a translation of a particular word, phrase, or sentence. Clicking on that word, phrase, or sentence downloads the audio file of the Texas German translation. This access option allows users to compare a controlled data set in order to figure out how different informants perform the same translation task. This remainder of this section (based on Boas 2006) gives a brief overview of how the resources contained in the Texas German Dialect Archive have been used over the past several years.

We begin with the usefulness of the archive for research purposes. The TGDP is the largest systematic effort since Gilbert (1972) to gather Texas German data for detailed studies tracing the development of this German dialect. The various types of data contained in the archive support linguistic research in a variety of ways. In particular, the archive offers several types of data important for cross-linguistic research on language contact, language change, and language death. First, the TGDP provides real time data. Re-recording Eikel's (1954) and Gilbert's (1972) word and sentence lists has resulted in a rich pool of data that can be compared to their original data and thus used as real-time evidence for language change.⁶ A comparison of the Texas German data with data from other languages will help to shed light on the mechanisms underlying language change and are useful for linguists interested in phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical changes. To take one specific example, Boas (forthcoming a, forthcoming b) discusses case loss in Texas German. Rerecording the word and sentence lists of Eikel (1954) and Gilbert (1972) allowed Boas (forthcoming b) to trace changes in the Texas German case system that have occurred since the data was originally recorded. In fact, one Texas German speaker from New Braunfels who was recorded for the TGDP in 2004 was also recorded by Fred Eikel in the late 1930s or early 1940s.

Second, the TGDA also provides apparent time data, as it contains recordings with members from two different generations and will provide material that will further our understanding of language change. The apparent time data can be coupled with the real time data, which will increase the reliability of diachronic studies of Texas German and also further our understanding of language change. In this respect, then, the TGDA can be compared with the pioneering research of Labov (1963), who relied on both real time and apparent time data in his Martha's Vineyard study. In fact, this is one of the reasons why Labov's Martha's Vineyard study was so

⁶ See Boas (2002) for additional discussion along these lines.

groundbreaking. (We hasten to point out that we are most emphatically not claiming that research based on the TGDA will be as influential or as valuable as Labov 1963, only that the same condition with regards to data exists.)⁷ Finally, the TGDA contains data reflecting different levels of spontaneity. Data that varies according to Himmelmann's (1998) spontaneity hierarchy (translation data, open-ended sociolinguistic interviews, and conversations among informants) was collected for each informant; this data, taken in conjunction with biographical data, allows linguists to examine a wide range of linguistic performances.

To date, the TGDA has been used for research on Texas German, as well as for comparative studies with other rapidly eroding dialects. Boas (forthcoming c), for instance, offers a major in-depth study of Texas German, based on data collected for the TGDA. Nicolini (2004) also draws on TGDA data for his research (although not to such an extent as Boas forthcoming c). Various student projects also rely on data from the TGDA, including Moran (2004) and Rybarski (2006), both undergraduate honors theses on Texas German phonology; Weilbacher (2008), a master's thesis on discourse markers in Texas German; and Roesch (in preparation), an ongoing doctoral dissertation on Texas Alsatian. However, the data provided by the TGDA are not only of interest to Germanic linguists. Because of their scope, format, and accessibility (on-line delivery of transcriptions and translations), they allow researchers working on other languages to access the Texas German data to help further the understanding of a range of phenomena from a cross-linguistic perspective.

The dialect archive has also been integral in developing and teaching linguistics courses. One of the main problems typically encountered by instructors when teaching linguistics classes is that students are asked to apply their knowledge of theoretical concepts by solving printed

⁷ See Haas (1999) and Wagener (2002) for some relevant discussion of the real time/ apparent time issue as it pertains to German and Bailey (2002) for a more general discussion of the issue.

exercises in textbooks or provided by the instructor. These traditional exercises do enable students to practice solving linguistic problems, but their lack of relevancy and immediacy generally results in pedagogic problems on two levels. First, traditional exercises generally fail to demonstrate the pervasiveness of linguistic problems in speech communities that students are exposed to in their daily lives and thereby create the false picture of linguistics as the study of exotic and remote languages. Second, traditional exercises can fail to excite and motivate students to conduct further research and learning on their own. Even when readings, class lectures, and exercises are augmented by recordings of interviews in class, students are usually left with no chance of using these recordings by themselves outside of class to work on homework assignments or conduct research of their own.

The web-based multimedia archive of Texas German seeks to overcome these problems by giving students the opportunity to gain access to interview data to conduct independent research on Texas German both in and outside the classroom. The TGDA's combination of audio clips with transcribed and translated textual data enables students to approximate sitting directly across from the Texas German informants as they talk. This high level of engagement has resulted in an array of original student research projects on Texas German language, history, and culture (including those noted above). Courses on linguistic and cultural aspects of Texas German are regularly offered at the University of Texas at Austin on both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and various other linguistics courses (e.g. on the history and structure of German, and on German sociolinguistics) at the same institution also draw on the data collected in the TGDA.

Finally, the TGDA has played an essential role in community outreach and heritage preservation efforts. The staff of the Texas German Dialect Project is regularly invited to give

guest lectures to local genealogical societies on the status of Texas German. These lectures raise awareness in the community about the current status of Texas German and enable the TGDP to connect with local schools and preservation societies eager to use TGDA materials for educational programs about Texas language, history, and culture. One of the ways in which the dialect archive will be used in the future is by setting up computer terminals in local museums to enable access to the archive. Museum visitors will then have immediate access to the archive and can listen to the stories and learn more about the history, culture, and language of the Texas German community. Although the Texas German Dialect Project is in the process of documenting Texas German, there does not appear to be much interest in the community to maintain the dialect. As one informant put it: “We know Texas German is dying out, but that’s the way it is. We do not need the language any more as English is more useful.” This attitude is unfortunately reflected in the failure of some recent maintenance efforts; Roesch (in progress) reports that a recent community education class on Texas Alsatian collapsed when the teachers could not agree on what form of Alsatian should be taught in the class. Despite these views towards language maintenance, feedback has been consistently positive regarding our outreach activities to genealogical and preservation societies, schools, and museums.

VI. Conclusions

This paper described the organization of the Texas German Dialect Project, which is in the process of documenting and archiving the remnants of the rapidly eroding dialect of Texas German. First, we gave an overview of the socio-historical background of the Texas German community from its founding in the early 1830s until the beginning of the 21st century. At present, there are fewer than 10,000 fluent speakers of Texas German, most of whom are over 60

years of age. Because the dialect is not passed on to younger generations it will most likely be extinct by the middle of the 21st century. The mission of the Texas German Dialect Project is, as stated, (1) to document Texas German as it reflects the rich cultural and linguistic traditions of its residents; (2) to gather basic research information about linguistic diversity in order to understand the nature of language variation, contact, and change; (3) to provide information about language differences and language change for public and educational interests, and (4) to use the collected materials for the improvement of educational programs about language and culture. The project's workflow consists of the following steps: recording interviews, editing the recordings, transcribing and translating the recordings, and finally storing the recordings together with their transcriptions and translations in the on-line multimedia Texas German Dialect Archive. Finally, we showed how the archived materials can be used for research, teaching, and community outreach. We hope that these applications of the Texas German Dialect Archive will prove to be the most useful and rewarding aspects of the Project as a whole, and will contribute to continued understanding and sharing of ideas and information about this community and their language in accordance with the principal missions of the TGDP.

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